

MOBILE SYMPHONY BOARD

2020-2021

To say that we are eagerly anticipating the 2020-2021 season and the opportunity to attend the first live performance of the MSO at the Saenger in 222 days is an understatement of epic proportions. We can't wait!

COVID-19 has created significant challenges for the MSO and for non-profit organizations throughout the United States, and we are so grateful for the encouragement and support we have received from our season ticket holders and patrons. Virtually without exception your response has been to ask what you can do to help, ranging from forgoing a refund for a canceled concert to increasing your financial support for the MSO. As with us, your priority is ensuring the continuity of this wonderful institution. To ensure the MSO's future we will need your continued generosity. By way of example, even with the anticipated resumption of live performances, attendance will be reduced due to social distancing requirements. We will be able to accommodate our season ticket holders but will need to limit single ticket sales, a significant source of our revenue. To compensate for this shortfall, we will need increased support from our donors. We ask that each of you thoughtfully consider your giving plans for the MSO and ways that you may increase your support.

During my career, Alane and I lived in many cities with outstanding symphonies, including Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Houston, Denver and Sydney Australia, but when we moved back to Mobile on a full-time basis in 2007 we were blown away by the quality of this orchestra. And we're not alone in that sentiment. One of the reasons we have been able to attract world renowned artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Renee Fleming, Joshua Bell and Olga Kern is the word-of-mouth advertising we receive from our guest artists. They praise the quality of the orchestra, our conductor and the warm and gracious hospitality they receive when in Mobile.

Celia Baehr and her staff have dedicated themselves to creating a safe and responsible way to return the MSO to live performances, considering both our audience and our musicians. I will call your attention to a couple of the key elements: Rather than having two concerts on a typical concert weekend, we will now offer four with a maximum attendance of 400 each in the 1,900 seat Saenger. We are shortening concerts slightly and eliminating intermission to reduce social-distancing issues. It is worth noting that we are now observing other symphonies begin to take similar approaches.

Let me close by thanking each of you for your unwavering support of this wonderful institution, and please make sure to spread the word – We're back! ■

Mark Hoffman, *Board Chair*



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